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EFFECT OF EAST EUROPEAN UNREST
ON SOVIET CAPABILITY TO ATTACK THE UNITED STATES

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I Summary of Unrest in East Germany

Disorders began in East Germany on 17 June based on widespread popular disaffection with the Communist regime. Hundreds of thousands of workers went on strike and demonstrated in over 60 cities throughout East Germany, and including the uranium mining center at Aue. These disorders were quelled within two days by an overwhelming show of Soviet military strength. Tension and sullen discontent has continued ever since. During 9-11 July this discontent was manifested by slowdown strikes in a number of major plants in the larger cities. On 2 August riots flared up again in at least five large East German cities when the regime prevented the people from traveling to West Berlin for Western food relief packages.

II Summary of Satellite Unrest

The demonstrations and strikes in Czechoslovakia during the first weeks in June highlighted the growing unrest throughout Eastern Europe. The demonstrations in Czechoslovakia were brought under control by the local security forces and there have been no further popular outbursts. Reports of widescale resistance and sabotage in Poland following the East German riots have been denied by Western officials in Poland and West Germany. Similarly reports of widescale demonstrations and strikes in other Eastern European countries are unconfirmed and are probably false.

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III Soviet military involvement in East German disturbances.

During the riots in East Germany beginning on 17 June Soviet troops were deployed to enforce martial law in at least twenty-one East German cities. Elements of most of the 22 Soviet divisions stationed in East Germany were used in this action. East Berlin was the center of disturbances and elements of at least three divisions, comprising an estimated 25,000 troops, were involved in this area.

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a sizable

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Soviet garrison force will probably be maintained there for sometime.

Similarly, stronger troop units are reported present in various permanent billeting areas, probably as a security measure against

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future outbreaks and unrest.

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The efficiency

of the Soviet military in East Germany has apparently not been significantly affected by the East German events.

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IV Effect of East European disturbances on Soviet Military Capabilities.

The recent disturbances within the European satellites have had no direct effect on the ability of the USSR to launch a military attack on the continental United States. There is no evidence of any threat to the Soviet atomic stockpile or to the Soviet long range air force, and no recent developments have appeared to jeopardize the security of staging bases likely to be used by Soviet atomic bombers. The Soviet atomic threat has thus not been diminished.

Considered in context, however, a direct Soviet attack on the continental US, as the initial blow of a World War III, should require full preparedness for action by Soviet military forces on all fronts, especially in West Europe. The recent disturbances in East Germany and the unrest in other Satellites have probably caused a slight deterioration in immediate Soviet military capabilities against West Europe. The unrest throughout Eastern Europe, and particularly that in East Germany, underscores the unreliability

of the population in the area through which Soviet lines of communication pass. In their reaction to the 17 June riots, Soviet military authorities displayed a lack of trust in the East German police and military forces and betrayed their belief that Soviet forces themselves had to be used to maintain control in East Germany. This suggests that in the event of military action, at least a portion of the 22 Soviet line divisions in East Germany would probably have to be diverted to a security mission.